

Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Haiti

United States Board on Geographic Names
Foreign Names Committee



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1. Introduction

This geographic names standardization policy has been prepared as an aid to those geographic names experts who are the working staff for the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) in the standardization of the geographic names of Haiti for United States Government use. The BGN and its staff work to effect consistent treatment of geographic name spellings in US Government databases, publications, maps, and charts. The country policies are intended to satisfy, in part, the statutory requirements levied upon the BGN in Public Law USC 80-242 to develop principles, policies, and procedures for geographic names standardization, and to promulgate decisions with respect to the principles of geographic nomenclature and orthography.

2. Languages and Language Policy

a. Demographics

The estimated population of Haiti as of July 2015 was 10 million people.¹ The largest single ethnic group is of Afro-Caribbean heritage, comprising approximately 95% of the population. The second largest ethnic group is of mixed Afro-Caribbean and European heritage, comprising approximately 5 % of the total population.

b. Languages

Haiti has two official languages, French (ISO 639-3 language code *fra*) and Haitian, also known as Haitian Creole (ISO 639-3 language code *hat*).² The development of Haitian dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, when slave owners and slaves supporting the country's plantation economy used a pidginized form of French with influences from various African languages.³ Authoritative sources may list geographic names in French, Haitian, or both. Aside from French and Haitian, English (*eng*) is widely spoken, particularly in the business community. Spanish (*spa*) is also spoken throughout the country, but to a lesser extent.⁴

c. Geographic Names Standardization

Haiti's National Center for Geospatial Information (*Centre National de l'Information Géo-Spatiale*, or *CNIGS*) was founded in 2007 and supports the national strategy in collecting, publishing, and disseminating geospatial information, satellite imagery, cartographic products, and toponymic information. The Center also provides information for development projects and maintains a public repository for geospatial products, norms and standards. Although newly founded, the Center has a

¹ *Haiti*, CIA The World Factbook online, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html> (Accessed January 21, 2015)

² *Constitution de la République d'Haiti* (Constitution of the Republic of Haiti) (1987), Chapter 1, Article 1. URL: <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Haiti/haiti1987fr.html>

³ *Haitian Creole*. UCLA Language Materials Project. URL: <http://lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?menu=004&LangID=2> (Accessed January 30, 2015)

⁴ *Doing Business in Haiti: 2013 Country Commercial Guide for US Companies*. URL: http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_5498757.pdf (Accessed January 21, 2015)

modern, user-friendly online interface and an impressive history of collaborating with international counterparts and participating in geospatial forums.⁵

3. Toponymic Policies

a. Orthography

Geographic names standardization policy will follow French and Haitian orthographic conventions. Authoritative native sources may contain place names in both French and Haitian, for example *Nord-Est* (fra)/*Nòdès* (hat). The Geographic Names Database (GNDB) recognizes place names in both languages as approved names, depending on the weight of the evidence.⁶

Approved or variant place names may also be in other languages, for example, *Arroyo Los Algodones* (spa) or *Artibonite River* (eng).

b. Romanization

Romanization is not required.

c. Diacritics

Diacritics are shown in standardized and variant names in conformance with native sources, French and Haitian orthography, and place names in other languages occasionally encountered in Haiti. Uppercase letters retain diacritics. In accordance with French and Haitian orthography, the below letter/diacritic combinations are those most commonly found in standardized name forms in Haiti:

| Character Name | Upper Case | Unicode Value | Lower Case | Unicode Value |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| A with grave accent | À | 00C0 | à | 00E0 |
| A with circumflex | Â | 00C2 | â | 00E2 |
| C with cedilla | Ç | 00C7 | ç | 00E7 |
| E with acute accent | É | 00C9 | é | 00E9 |
| E with dieresis | Ë | 00CB | ë | 00EB |
| E with grave accent | È | 00C8 | è | 00E8 |
| E with circumflex | Ê | 00CA | ê | 00EA |
| I with circumflex | Î | 00CE | î | 00EE |
| I with dieresis | Ï | 00CF | ï | 00EF |
| N with tilde | Ñ | 00D1 | ñ | 00F1 |
| O with grave accent | Ò | 00D2 | ò | 00F2 |
| O with circumflex | Ô | 00D4 | ô | 00F4 |
| U with grave accent | Ù | 00D9 | ù | 00F9 |
| U with circumflex | Û | 00D8 | û | 00FB |

⁵ *Mission*, Centre National de l'Information Géo-Spatiale. Translated from French. URL: <http://www.cnigs.ht/CNIGS/mission.php> (Accessed January 23, 2015)

⁶ US Board on Geographic Names, Foreign Names Committee, 381st Session, *Item 5.3 Recommended File Changes: Haiti*. December 9, 2014.

d. Generic Terms

A generic is a term used to describe a geographic feature, such as ‘river,’ ‘hill,’ and ‘lake.’ If the generic term does not identify the feature, the term should be considered a false generic and should not be added to the generic field of the GNDB. Generic terms are not collected for populated places. Appendix A provides a partial list of common generic terms one may encounter in Haitian geographic names sources.

e. Hyphenation, Capitalization, and Spelling

Haitian geographic names follow French and Haitian grammar and spelling conventions. When hyphenated place names are encountered on authoritative sources, hyphens should also be included in the feature name.

Definite articles such as *le, la, l', les* (fra) are generally capitalized when in initial position as part of the proper feature name, and should be collected as shown in the native source— for example, *La Souris* and *Rivière La Gouasse*. If the article is capitalized on the native source, it becomes part of the proper name, as in *La Gouasse, Rivière*. In French orthography, when the article modifies a noun that starts with a vowel, the article is attached by an apostrophe, as in *Rivière l'Estère*. If the article appears in lower case on the source, the article is not collected as part of the proper name— for example, *Estère, Rivière l'*.

Conjunctions, such as *et* (‘and’) and prepositions, such as *à* (‘at’, ‘in’), *du, de, des, d'* in French and *di* in Haitian (‘of’, ‘from’) are collected in lower case, as in *Rivière Trou d'Enfer* (fra) or *Plèn di Nò* (hat). Although conventional French grammar dictates a partitive article (*du, de, des, d'*) in a non-initial position be written in lowercase, there are some Haitian sources which capitalize the article. In these instances, the feature should be collected as it is written on the native source— for example, *Plaine D'Olive*.

In Haitian orthography, the article is incorporated as part of the proper name most of the time. For instance, the *Petite Rivière l'Artibonite* (fra) becomes *Ti Rivyè Latibonit* in Haitian. In other cases, both the conjunction and the article combine with the proper names, for example, *Ravine de l'Eau Higuey* (fra), becomes *Ravine D'Lo Higuey* in Haitian. In cases where either the article or both the conjunction and the article are joined to the proper name, they should be collected as one. For example, *Ravine D'Lo Higuey* should be collected as *D'Lo Higuey, Ravine* in Haitian.

If the place name is written in all capital letters on the native source, a non-initial definite article, conjunction or preposition will be in lower case when the standardized name form is derived, unless nearby associated features suggest otherwise. In the absence of conclusive evidence, definite articles, conjunctions, or prepositions found beyond the initial position are written in lowercase letters in the standardized name form, as in *Rivière de l'Acul*.

The below chart shows additional examples of the article and preposition capitalization standard using the generic terms *Rivière* (river) and *Golfe* (gulf):

| Native Source Spelling | Collect as |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Rivière La Gouasse</i> | <i>La Gouasse, Rivière</i> |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Rivière de la Gosseline</i> | <i>Gosseline, Rivière de la</i> |
| <i>Rivière de Dame Marie</i> | <i>Dame Marie, Rivière de</i> |
| <i>Rivière l’Ocean</i> | <i>Ocean, Rivière l’</i> |
| <i>Rivière L’Îlet</i> | <i>L’Îlet, Rivière</i> |
| <i>GOLFE DE LA GONAVE</i> | <i>Gonave, Golfe de la</i> |

f. Numbers

Names containing cardinal or ordinal numerals are not very common in Haiti, but when encountered, should be treated according to the following guidelines:

- Arabic numbers are generally expanded in French or in Haitian Creole.
- Roman numerals are retained throughout, although these are not commonly found in Haitian geographic names.

These guidelines apply to numerals in both initial and non-initial positions.

g. Optional Long and Short Forms

Short forms are not added to long form variant names in the GNDB.

Long and short forms of names of populated places are approved when supported by official evidence; as in, *Arrondissement du Trou du Nord* (long form) – *Trou du Nord* (short form). Short forms are not added for variant names in the GNDB.

h. Unique Linguistic Situations

Alternate Names

Feature names in Haitian sources may appear with alternate names in parentheses. The alternate name may appear in Haitian, Spanish, English, or another language. Names in French followed by an alternate in Haitian are especially common, for example, *Nord-Ouest (Nòdwès)* or *Ravine de l’Eau Higuey (Ravine D’Lo Higuey)*. For standardization purposes, both names are selected as approved names, but will be ranked according to the weight of the available evidence. Generally, the name in parenthesis will be assigned name rank #2.

Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations of generics and other descriptors which are commonly found on cartographic products of Haiti. This list is not exhaustive, and other abbreviations may be found. Any abbreviations must be spelled out in the GNDB.

| <u>Abbreviated Form</u> | <u>Unabbreviated Form</u> | <u>Definition</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Grd./Grde. | <i>Grand/Grande</i> (fra) | Big |
| I. | <i>Île</i> (fra) | Island |
| Pte. | <i>Pointe</i> (fra) | Point |
| Ptit./Ptite. | <i>Petit/Petite</i> (fra) | Small |
| Rav. | <i>Ravine</i> (fra) | Ravine, Intermittent Stream |
| Riv. | <i>Rivière</i> (fra) | River, Stream |
| St./Ste. | <i>Saint/Sainte</i> (fra) | Saint |

4. Political Geography Policy

a. Country Name and Capital

Country Name

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Conventional long form: | Republic of Haiti ⁷ |
| Conventional short form: | Haiti |
| French long form: | République d'Haïti |
| French short form: | Haïti |
| Haitian Creole long form: | Repiblik d Ayiti |
| Haitian Creole short form: | Ayiti |

Capital (PPLC)

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| French approved name: | Port-au-Prince |
| Haitian Creole approved name: | Pòtoprens |

b. First-order Administrative Divisions

Haiti lists ten *départements/depaman* (departments), or first-order administrative divisions. The departments are subdivided into 41 *arrondissements/awondisman* (second-level administrative divisions), and 133 *communes/komin* (third-level administrative divisions).

Please see Appendix B for maps depicting first-order administrative divisions in Haiti.

| | Name | Generic | Seat | GEC | GENC |
|------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| FRA | Nord-Ouest | Département | Port-de-Paix | HA03 | HT-NO |
| HAT | Nòdwès | Depatman | Pòdpè | | |
| FRA | Artibonite | Département | Gonaïves | HA06 | HT-AR |
| HAT | Latibonit | Depatman | Gonayiv | | |
| FRA | Centre | Département | Hinche | HA07 | HT-CE |
| HAT | Sant | Depatman | Ench | | |

⁷ Note: Haiti is assigned the GENC status of Exception because the GENC Standard specifies the country's full name as "Republic of Haiti" while ISO3166-1 specifies "the Republic of Haiti." See *ISO Exceptions and Extensions* for more information (<https://nsgreg.nga.mil/gencc/view?v=207840&month=1&day=28&year=2015>)

| | Name | Generic | Seat | GEC | GENC |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--|------|-------|
| FRA HAT | Nord Nò | Département Depatman | Cap-Haïtien Okap | HA09 | HT-ND |
| FRA HAT | Nord-Est Nòdès | Département Depatman | Fort-Liberté Fòlibète | HA10 | HT-NE |
| FRA HAT | Ouest Lwès | Département Depatman | Port-au-Prince ⁸ Pòtoprens | HA11 | HT-OU |
| FRA HAT | Sud Sid | Département Depatman | Les Cayes Okay | HA12 | HT-SD |
| FRA HAT | Sud-Est Sidès | Département Depatman | Jacmel Jakmèl | HA13 | HT-SE |
| FRA HAT | Grand'Anse Grandans | Département Depatman | Jérémie Jeremi | HA14 | HT-GA |
| FRA HAT | Nippes Nip | Département Depatman | Miragoâne Miragwàn | HA15 | HT-NI |

c. Disputed Territories

The only international dispute in Haiti involves US-administered Navassa Island, also known as *La Navasse* (fra) or *Lanavaz* (hat), an uninhabited island off the west coast of Haiti.⁹ The United States claimed the island in 1857 and does not recognize Haiti's claims. Navassa Island is administered as an unincorporated US territory.¹⁰

For the latest information on country-specific boundary disputes, please visit the Boundaries and Sovereignty Encyclopedia (B.A.S.E.), U.S. Department of State (Online), URL: <http://base.us-state.osis.gov/home.asp>.

5. Source Material

The preferred mapping authority for Haiti is the National Center for Geospatial Information (Centre National de l'Information Géo-Spatiale). The Center's information as of November 2015:

Address: Impasse Baron #13 bis, Turgeau
Port-au-Prince, Haiti (HT 6113)
Telephone: (509) 2813-0412
Email: contact@cnigs.ht
URL: www.cnigs.ht

Other preferred references include those produced by the Armed Forces of Haiti and the military

⁸ In addition to being the seat of Ouest/Lwès, Port-au-Prince/Pòtoprens is also the capital of Haiti.

⁹ *Navassa Island: A Photographic Tour (1998-1999)*. USGS. URL: <http://coastal.er.usgs.gov/navassa/> (Accessed January 28, 2015)

¹⁰ "Navassa Island Lighthouse". *The Lighthouse Directory*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. URL: <https://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/lighthouse/nvi.htm> (Accessed January 28, 2015)

engineers within the Geodesy Service (*Service de Géodésie et des Forces Armées d'Haïti*); the Department of Public Works (*Département des Travaux Publics*); the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Informatics (*l'Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique*, or *IHSI*) within the Ministry of Economics and Finance, or other government agencies.¹¹

Academic sources, such as those produced by one of Haiti's universities, the UN and US government agencies, and international organizations like the Organization of American States (*Organisation des États Américains*) may be used; however, these are not considered authoritative unless they contain a caveat that the information contained was produced for the Haitian government.

a. Preferred Sources

The following list of preferred sources is not all-inclusive, but it highlights several to be used for geographic name selection.

1. 1:250,000 scale map, *Carte administrative de la République d'Haïti*, Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique (Haitian Institute of Statistics and Informatics), December 1992. Available [here](#).
2. 1:250,000 scale map, *République d'Haïti*, prepared for the United Nations Observer Group for the Verifications of the Elections in Haiti (ONUVEH), 1990.

¹¹ République d'Haïti, Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, Institut Haïtien de Statistique et d'Informatique.
URL: www.ihsi.ht/index.htm (Accessed January 23, 2015)

Appendix A. Generic Term Glossary

| English | French | Haitian | Spanish | Designation Code |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Airport | <i>Aéroport</i> | <i>Ayewopò</i> | <i>Aeropuerto</i> | <i>AIRP</i> |
| Arrondissement | <i>Arrondissement</i> | <i>Awondisman</i> | | <i>ADM2</i> |
| Bay | <i>Baie</i> | <i>Bè</i> | <i>Bahía</i> | <i>BAY</i> |
| Bridge | <i>Pont</i> | <i>Pon</i> | <i>Puente</i> | <i>BDG</i> |
| Canal | <i>Canal</i> | <i>Kanal</i> | <i>Canal</i> | <i>CNL</i> |
| Cemetery | <i>Cimetière</i> | <i>Simityè</i> | <i>Cementerio</i> | <i>CMTY</i> |
| Church/Chapel | <i>Église/Chapelle</i> | <i>Legliz/Chapèl</i> | <i>Iglesia/Capilla</i> | <i>CH</i> |
| Commune | <i>Commune</i> | <i>Komin</i> | <i>Municipio</i> | <i>ADM3</i> |
| Cove | <i>Anse</i> | <i>Anse/Ans¹²</i> | <i>Ensenada</i> | <i>COVE</i> |
| Dam | <i>Barrage</i> | <i>Baraj/Dam</i> | <i>Presa</i> | <i>DAM</i> |
| Department | <i>Département</i> | <i>Depatman</i> | <i>Departamento</i> | <i>ADM1</i> |
| Factory | <i>Usine</i> | <i>Izin</i> | <i>Fábrica</i> | <i>MFG</i> |
| Farm | <i>Ferme</i> | <i>Fèm</i> | <i>Granja</i> | <i>FRM</i> |
| Forest | <i>Bois, Forêt</i> | <i>Bwa, Forè</i> | <i>Bosque</i> | <i>FRST</i> |
| Grassland | <i>Savane</i> | <i>Savann</i> | <i>Sabana</i> | <i>GRSLD</i> |
| Gulf | <i>Golfe</i> | <i>Gòlf/Gòf</i> | <i>Gulfo</i> | <i>GULF</i> |
| Hill, Mountain | <i>Colline, Mont, Morne</i> | <i>Mòn</i> | <i>Cerro, Montaña</i> | <i>HLL, MT</i> |
| Hospital | <i>Hôpital</i> | <i>Lopital</i> | <i>Hospital</i> | <i>HSP</i> |
| Isle, Island | <i>Île, Îlet, Îlot</i> | <i>Zile</i> | <i>Isla</i> | <i>ISL</i> |
| Lake | <i>Étang, Lac, Trou</i> | <i>Etan, Lak</i> | <i>Lago</i> | <i>LK</i> |
| Mountains | <i>Chaine, Massif</i> | <i>Mòn</i> | <i>Cordillera</i> | <i>MTS</i> |
| Ravine/Intermittent Stream | <i>Ravine</i> | <i>Ravin</i> | <i>Barranco/a</i> | <i>RVN, STMI</i> |
| Peak, Mountain | <i>Pic</i> | <i>Pik</i> | <i>Pico</i> | <i>PK, MT</i> |
| Peninsula | <i>Presqu'île</i> | <i>Penensil</i> | <i>Península</i> | <i>PEN</i> |
| Point | <i>Pointe, Cap</i> | <i>Kap</i> | <i>Punta</i> | <i>PT</i> |
| Pond, Lake | <i>Étang, Trou</i> | <i>Etan/Letan</i> | <i>Estanque</i> | <i>PND, LK</i> |
| Port | <i>Port</i> | <i>Pò</i> | <i>Puerto</i> | <i>PRT</i> |
| River/Stream/Creek | <i>Rivière/Fleuve/Ravine</i> | <i>Rivyè</i> | <i>Arroyo, Río</i> | <i>STM</i> |
| Reef | <i>Récif</i> | <i>Resif</i> | <i>Arrecife</i> | <i>RF</i> |
| Road | <i>Route</i> | <i>Wout</i> | <i>Ruta</i> | <i>RD</i> |
| Road Junction | <i>Carrefour</i> | <i>Entèseksyon</i> | <i>Intersección</i> | <i>RDJCT</i> |
| Rock | <i>Roche</i> | <i>Wòch/Woche</i> | <i>Roca</i> | <i>RK</i> |
| Waterfall | <i>Cascade</i> | <i>Kaskad</i> | <i>Salto, Cascada</i> | <i>FLLS</i> |

¹² If joined with the proper name, as in *Answouj* (hat)/*Anse Rouge* (fra)

Appendix B. First-order Administrative Divisions of Haiti *French Language Version*



Haitian Language Version

